



In response to California's extreme drought and the need for water resilience, Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) has undertaken a comprehensive program of water stewardship initiatives that include stormwater capture, climate-wise landscaping, and educational and awareness campaigns. LAUSD's Stormwater Management Policy established the integration of Low Impact Development (LID) design principles and Best Management Practices (BMPs) into existing schools receiving significant facility improvements. Low Impact Development Best Management Practices (LID BMPs) mimic the slow, spread, and sink functions of a natural watershed, thereby resulting in multiple benefits that include reduced flooding, increased water quality, and increased habitat for pollinators, and can be used as living laboratories for curriculum.



DROPS Education and Outreach Team

The Education and Outreach or E&O of DROPS consists of four components: student engagement, community engagement, professional development and curricula integration, and staff technical trainings. The E&O team comprises Council for Watershed Health, TreePeople and Los Angeles Audubon Society. Each partner plays an integral role in providing resource tools to each campus, including: EcoClubs, field trips to Kenneth Hahn and Ballona Wetlands, STEAM meetings and professional development for teachers, and technical training for operations and maintenance staff. The goal of the E&O team is to engage and educate on stormwater capture, native plants, biodiversity, and water conservation, which empowers teachers and students to become water ambassadors of their campus through the use of living laboratories.



Student Engagement

TreePeople will lead a series of student engagement activities including EcoClubs, Instant Experts Activities and student meetings with the DROPS Landscape Architects.

EcoClubs - Are a group of students (ideally across grade levels) who are willing to engage in a variety of action-based projects that focus on LID BMPs on campus.

Instant Experts Activity - A hands-on educational activity that results in students creating infographic posters about water quality and quantity, which can be displayed at community engagement meetings.

Landscape Architect Meetings - Students will develop LID design ideas and plant recommendations to be presented to the DROPS Landscape Architects working on that campus project.



Community Engagement

TreePeople and partners will coordinate two public presentations and/or events at each school campus to highlight the purpose of the project and raise water sustainability awareness.



Professional Development and Curricula Integration

Los Angeles Audubon Society (LAAS) will demonstrate to teachers how to use these new features to complement and expand the campus learning experience through field trips, professional development opportunities, and on-campus nature-based visits.

Field Trips - Participating schools will have the opportunity to visit the Ballona Wetlands and Kenneth Hahn State Recreation Area to better understand how their campus and community fit into the broader concept of the landscape. Transportation and in-class pre-site visits will be provided.

Professional Development - LAAS will collaborate with teachers from each participating school to support the development of lesson plans that reflect classroom interests, promote a cross-curricular approach, directly engage with on-campus features, and capitalize on existing teaching resources.

Curriculum Enhancement Visits - LAAS will again collaborate with teachers to provide on-campus visits that enhance and complement existing learning goals and lesson plans, through activities such as nature walks, and science illustration workshops to create student-generated content for DROPS campus signage.

STEAM Workshops - Teams of students, educators and parents are encouraged to participate in an annual STEAM workshop at a DROPS campus. Teams will share what they've learned on their respective campuses and field trips.



Staff Technical Trainings

Council for Watershed Health will develop a site-specific plant maintenance manual, video and training materials for each campus. The training videos will include sections highlighting the design intent and management needs for the BMPs specific to each school site.